

Annual Report presented to Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services Commission and Executive team.

By Yasmin Avila on behalf of the Business Services Program

Introduction: This comprehensive report summarizes the Business Services Program's activities from January 2023 to November 2023. It covers various initiatives, partnerships, events, and achievements aimed at fostering employment opportunities, diversity, and inclusion for people with disabilities within the workforce.

Business Services Team Functions:

Business engagement/Business Services involve interaction between employers, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and other workforce development and education organizations (partners). This interaction results in measurable improvement in desired outcomes for both parties, making it a key component in enhancing employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

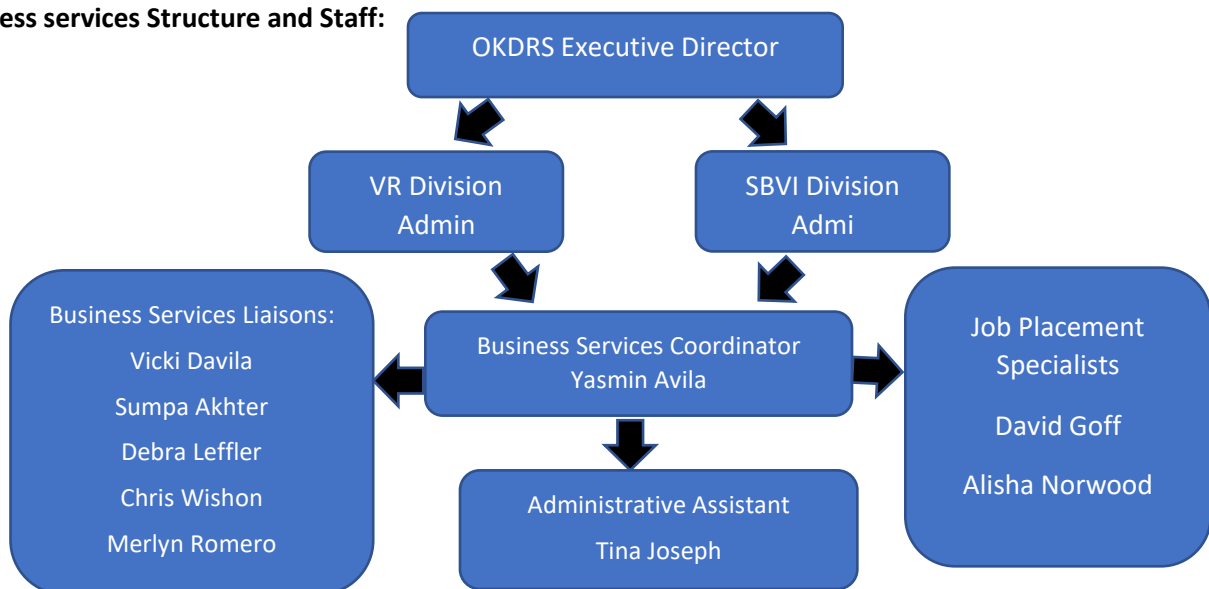
Populations Served by Business Services in Oklahoma:

- Businesses and any organization capable of employing people with disabilities
- OKDRS Participants/Job Seekers with Disabilities
- OKDRS Fields staff (Counselors, Techs, Teachers, and other specialists)

Services Offered in Oklahoma:

- Quality, loyal and skilled candidates for your workforce needs.
- Comprehensive variety of no cost training for your company.
- DRS incentives for paid learning experiences.
- Consultation on tax incentives for hiring people with disabilities and improving workplace accessibility.
- Ongoing support for candidates and businesses throughout their adaptation journey.
- Networking and hiring events.
- Tailored services designed to meet unique business needs.

Business services Structure and Staff:



BSP Members:

Business Services Liaisons one per Workforce Region

- Northeast: Sumpa Akhter
- Green Country: Victoria Davila
- Central: Merlyn Romero
- South Central: Debra Leffler
- Western: Christine Wishon
- Southern: Vacant, hiring process to be completed in February

Job Placement Specialists

- Green Country: David Goff
- Western: Alisha Norwood
- Central: Vacant, hiring process to be completed in February
- No positions available in the other 3 regions now

Administrative Assistant

- Tina Joseph

Business Services Coordinator

- Yasmin Avila covers the 6 regions

Note: Report in next page

Report 2023

Windmills Disability Awareness Training and Presentations:

- Windmills Disability Awareness Training at the University of Central Oklahoma, Sherwin Williams HR Team and Green Country Business Advisory Council.
- Several presentations about DRS Field Services and Business Services including Green Country Business Alliance, OSU Healthcare Network, the Purcell Rotary Club, the University of Oklahoma, Green Country One Stop Operator, Central Oklahoma Workforce Initiatives Board, Randstad International Sourceright, Oklahoma Blood Institute, Solari,

Facts and Snacks Critical Occupations in Healthcare with Mercy Hospitals:

- Hosted a successful hybrid event focusing on Occupations in Healthcare.
- Received job applicants from DRS following the event.

Facts and Snacks Event with CompSource Mutual OKC (September 27):

- Conducted an informative event in collaboration with CompSource Mutual OKC.
- Connected Workforce Boards, partners, and job seekers with critical job opportunities in the insurance sector.

Small Hiring Events:

- Held two small hiring events with an average of 97 attendees and 9 businesses.

Partners Meetings, Networking, and Hiring Events:

- BSP Team attended 146 meetings and events, including Job Fairs and Hiring Events.
- Engaged with the Talent Acquisition Portal and hosted 5 virtual events including one training for OKDRS staff, one training for OKDRS clients, and three demos for two different companies.

Partnerships:

- Initiated partnerships with Langston University for a Self-Employment Education Program for People with Disabilities, and the Direct Employees Association to.
- Randstad international to create a talent pool pf people with disabilities and Oklahoma to be the single point of contact for the country.
- CVS who offered a no cost space in their training center to be used by DRS staff.
 - Ongoing partnership with CVS has provided 200 job opportunities for clients.
 - 20 applications submitted from OKDRS, resulting in 20 interviews, 3 job offers and 1 hire.
- Ditch Witch who also hosted an externship for DRS staff.
- Ongoing Partnership with Mercy Hospitals that had as a result the participation of Marcy in OKDRS Transition Programs and several events hosted with them.

Job Placement:

We have Two Job Placement Specialists in OKDRS for the State of Oklahoma. One is located in Tulsa, he was hired in October 2022, and works for the Green Country Region. A new one was hired in November 2023, and she works for the Western Region of Oklahoma and is located in Ada Office

- In a period of 9 months 33 referrals 14 placements
- 2 went to Supported Employment
- 3 dropped due to health issues
- 5 clients lost contact
- 9 continue working with the Job Placement Specialist

Project Collaboration with ORC and OSU:

- Collaborated on a project with ORC and OSU to develop an interface and software for generating accessibility in manufacturing machines.

Employers in Action Business Event:

- Invited Western Business services Liaison and attended the Employers in Action event at the Capitol.

Claremore Chamber of Commerce and Governor's Mansion Interaction:

- Participated in the Business Services Program with the Claremore Chamber of Commerce.
- Attended lunch at the Governor's Mansion, interacted with the Governor.

Green Country BAC and Transition Colleagues:

- Attended the Green Country BAC on April 18th.
- Invited Transition Colleagues to talk to businesses about their Summer Programs.

OKHR State Conference Participation:

- BSP team participated in the OKHR State Conference.
- Spoke at the Non-Traditional Hiring panel at the conference.
- Received business referrals from Vast OKC, OKC Community Foundation, and UCO.

Elevate Training with OKC Chamber of Commerce:

- Attended the Elevate training with the OKC Chamber of Commerce.

National Panel Speaker for Direct Employees Association:

- Presented as a speaker for a national panel about BIPOC and Disability.

Vendor Support and Assistance:

- Assisted vendors, including DRTC and the Galt Foundation, in connecting with resources.

Inclusion, and Disability Training (November 3):

- Provided a training session for the DRS Business Advisory Council in collaboration with Dr. Tamecca Rogers from Tulsa Tech.

NDEAM Inclusive Hiring Event with Mercy Hospitals (October 6):

- Participated in the NDEAM Inclusive Hiring Event with Mercy Hospitals.
- DRS clients exclusively invited for on-site interviews.

Sherwin Williams Training Session (November 13):

- Second training session provided to the Sherwin Williams regional management team.

Growing Partnership with Randstad Sourceright US:

- DRS Business Services Team to become the national point of contact for VR Departments.

Educational Program with NEWB, Cherokee Nation, and Ports of Catoosa:

- Actively engaged in an educational program and pathways to employment initiative for the Ports and associated companies.

OKDRS Disability Awareness Month Closure Event:

- Developed a plan for the OKDRS Disability Awareness Month Closure Event.
- Plan approved by Director Freundt; collaboration with ORC expected.

Increased Business Referrals:

- Received on average 3-5 monthly business referrals

Business Advisory Councils

- 14 Business Advisory Councils in 5 Workforce Regions with the participation of 157 businesses

Ribbon Cuttings

- Two ribbon cuttings with the participation of the Chambers of Commerce and our DRS staff

Employment opportunities

- An average of 1365 job opportunities offered directly to OKDRS through the Business Services Program.

Consultation and assessments:

- To Mercy Hospitals through our Assistive Technology team with the assistance of Terri Murphy
- To Tulsa Tech in ADA compliance. With the collaboration of Charles Watt who is reviewing all the Tulsa Tech facilities and presenting a report to them.

For further questions about this report, reach out to Yasmin Avila at YAvilaGuillen@okdrs.gov